CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller;

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module;

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with temporal negotiation transactions, said rule defining programming configured to receive a bid offer from a bidder for an item for sale, said rule defining programming configured to receive in conjunction with said bid offer a bid expiration condition for said bid offer, said rule defining programming configured to cancel said bid offer when said bid expiration condition is met, said rule defining programming configured to receive a sale offer from a seller for an item for sale, said rule defining programming configured to receive in conjunction with

said sale offer a sale expiration condition for said sale offer, and said rule defining programming configured to cancel said sale offer when said sale expiration condition is met.

2. The auction system of claim 1, wherein the seller and the buyer can retract said bid offer and can retract said sale offer at any time before said bid offer is accepted and at any time before said sale offer is accepted.

3. The auction system of claim 1, wherein bartering of goods is supported, and where participants can offer the exchange of goods as part of said participants offer.

4. The auction system of claim 1, wherein composite offers are supported, said composite offers include both the bartering and monetary offers.

5. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller; and

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction

rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module,

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with bundle-based auction transactions, said rule defining programming configured to receive from a seller a plurality of goods for sale, said plurality of goods defining a bundle, said rule defining programming configured to receive from the seller a shared reserve price for the bundle, as well as potential reserve prices for single said items and subsets of said items, said rule defining programming configured to open sale of the plurality of goods, said rule defining programming configured to receive bids for said plurality of goods from bidders, said rule defining programming configured to close sale of the plurality of goods when the total bid amounts for the plurality of goods satisfies the shared reserve price, and in another specified time following such event, said rule defining programming configured to close sale of a subset of the goods given the sum of winning bids for them had hit a corresponding shared reserve price for the subset, and said rule defining programming configured to close sale maximizing the number of sold goods under the constraint that the sum of winning bids for the set of sold goods is at least as high as the reserve price for that set.

6. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves

made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller; and

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module,

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with tournament auction transactions, said rule defining programming configured to receive a plurality of items for sale by a seller, said rule defining programming configured to auction said items sequentially in a series of rounds of bidding, a set of auctioned items at each round of bidding, said rule defining programming configured to receive bids for said auctioned items from a plurality of bidders during each round, said rule defining programming configured to allocate the items auctioned in a round to the highest bidders of that round, and said rule defining programming configured to admit to each subsequent rounds of bidding a subset of the bidders from the previous round, said subset selected according to the bid amount placed by each bidder such that bidders with higher bids are prioritized over bidders with lower bids.

7. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves

made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller; and

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module,

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with team auction transactions, said rule defining programming configured to auction said items and prizes to individual participants and teams of participants, said rule defining programming configured to partition said participants into teams, said rule defining programming configured to aggregate participants' bids into team bids, said rule defining programming configured to allocate said items and said prizes based on said participants' bids and said teams' bids, said rule defining programming configured to determine the auction dynamics based on said participants' bids and said teams' bids.

8. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller; and

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module,

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with conversion auction transactions, said rule defining programming configured to auction said items and prizes to participants, said rule defining programming configured to dynamically determine reserve prices based on bids made and a bidders' transaction history, said rule defining programming configured to integrate the benefit of a customer conversion into a reserve prices computation, said rule defining programming configured to allocate said items and said prizes based on participant's bids and specified monetary benefits of conversion, while preventing participants with low bids from being allocated said items and said prizes instead of participants with higher bids.

9. In a computer device, an online auction system having at least one seller and at least one buyer, said auction system comprising:

a) an interface module configured to provide a user interface between the seller and the bidder;

b) a transaction module operatively coupled for communication to said interface module configured to manage transaction associated with moves made by the seller and the bidder in conjunction with a sale of an item by the seller; and

c) a mechanism module operatively coupled for communication to said transaction module, said mechanism module defining at least one auction

rule, said transaction module further configured to carry out transactions according to said auction rule defined by said mechanism module,

said mechanism module comprises rule defining programming associated with bargain market transactions, said rule defining programming configured to alter the sellers ask price, said rule defining programming configured to retract the buyers bid, said rule defining programming configured to set an expiration date for a buyer's offer, said rule defining programming configured to put many units of the same goods for sale by the seller, said rule defining programming configured to reveal and to seal bids, said rule defining programming configured to present to the seller a revenue obtainable through a sale of a subset of said goods, said rule defining programming configured to put substitute goods for sale in place of said subset of said goods, wherein when said subset of said goods are sold, said substitute goods are removed from sale, and said rule defining programming configured to support a seller to specify getting goods introduced into said system by another seller and to add a complementary monetary offer to said goods introduced into said system by another seller.

add a17